

Saturday Magazine.

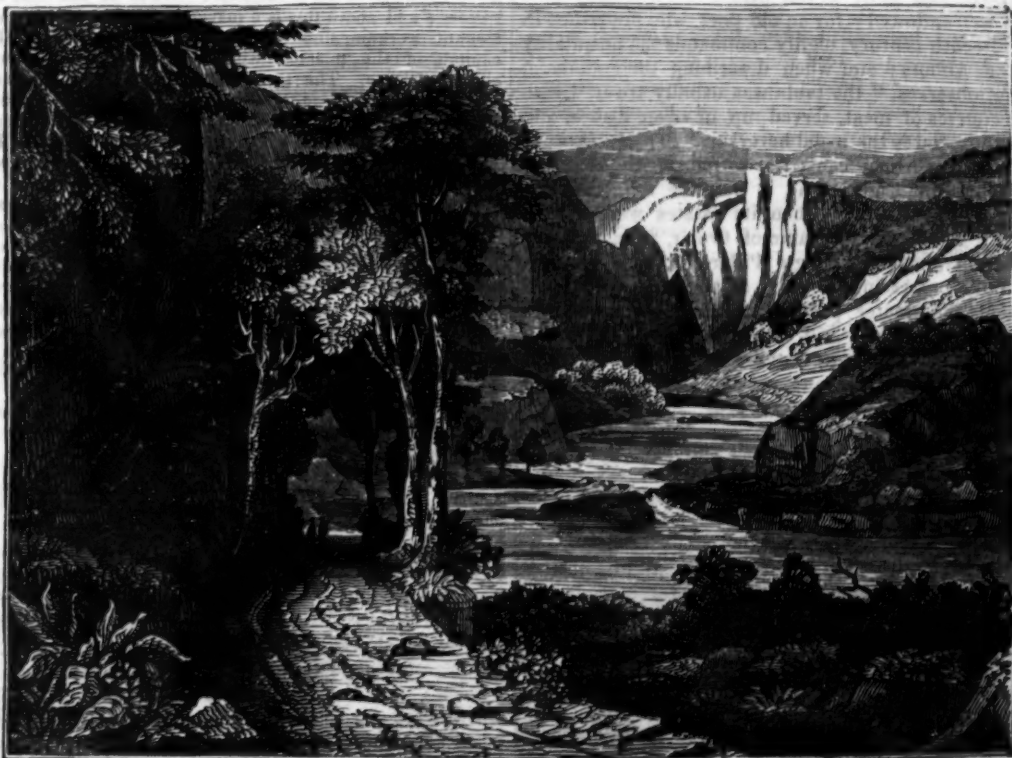
No. 302.

MARCH

18TH, 1837.

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ONE PENNY.

DOVEDALE.—SCENERY OF DERBYSHIRE.



DOVEDALE, DERBYSHIRE.

My pilgrimage rests here, beyond the bound
Of habitation, in the dale profound,
Where Doves by rock and cavern glides serene,
Through solitude where nought of life is seen,
Through silence that forbids all earthly sound.
Vain world, pursue me if thou canst!

DERBY is an interesting county. As the traveller journeys northward, after he enters its borders, a new country comes on apace. The rising grounds become insensibly more wild; rocks start more frequently and abruptly from the soil; and he perceives that he is entering the great central tract of highlands, which arising in these parts, form themselves into mountains; and spreading progressively, run with little interruption in a north-westerly direction to the borders of Scotland, dividing Lancashire from Yorkshire in their course, and composing the whole county of Westmoreland, and part of Cumberland. The surface of Derbyshire is infinitely varied. Mr. Rhodes, an elegant local topographer observes, that:—

Travellers accustomed to well-wooded and highly-cultivated scenes only, have frequently expressed a feeling bordering on disgust, at the bleak and barren appearance of the mountains in the Peak of Derbyshire: but, to a man whose taste is unsophisticated by a fondness for artificial adornments, they possess superior interest, and impart more pleasing sensations. Remotely seen, they are often beautiful; many of their forms, even when near, are decidedly good; and in distance, the features of rudeness, by which

they are occasionally marked, are softened down into general, and sometimes harmonious masses. The graceful and long-continued outline which they present, the breadth of light and shadow that spread over their extended surfaces, and the delightful colouring with which they are often invested, never fail to attract the attention of the picturesque traveller*.

On the borders of these dreary moors, is Castleton Dale, a wide open scene of cultivation; the first sign of a more cheerful landscape, and celebrated for the remarkable chasm called the *Devil's Cave*, described in our first volume.

The most striking features of Derbyshire, unquestionably, are its dales. Beautiful as these are, they derive a still greater charm from the effect of local contrast. Environed by bleak and precipitous mountain-tracts, the luxuriance and variety of the dale refresh the eye, like a rich picture teeming with sunshine and joyousness. The dales, however, are exceedingly diversified. Castleton Dale, the most extensive in the county, is nearly six miles in length, and in some parts, almost two broad: and its effect may be imagined, when the reader learns the fact, that its depth is about one thousand feet below the general level of the surrounding country. To us, however, the smaller dales, particularly that which it is our more immediate purpose to describe, present

* The highest hills in Derbyshire, are, the Lord's Seat, 1752 feet; Axledge, the same; and Holme Moss, 1857 feet.

still greater attractions. Middleton Dale, a narrow, winding chasm; the vale of Matlock, a most delightful scene, (which we have recently described,) in which, a classic topographer observes, the ideas of sublimity and beauty are blended in a high degree, are two of the most romantic of these scenes;—but DOVEDALE is incomparably the finest example in the county.

The most frequented entrance to this highly-picturesque glen, is about a mile from the road leading from Ashbourne, (a pleasant town in the immediate vicinity,) to Buxton, near the remarkable detached cone-shaped hill, called Thorpe Cloud, which forms quite a "landmark" to a wide district. The descent towards the dale is through a wild and narrow chasm, one side of which is composed of naked beetling rocks, rising to a vast height, whilst the other presents a striking contrast of bushy precipices and green herbage. The dale takes its name from the Dove, a torrent-stream, which rises from a lofty hill, called Axedge, near Buxton, previously noticed, from which spring four rivers, that run in opposite directions. Proceeding in a southerly direction, it hurries through Dovedale, filling the glen with its melody,—one of the finest of those mountain-streams, which form objects of such peculiar interest in Derbyshire.

The valley of Dovedale is narrow at the bottom; indeed, for a considerable portion of its extent, it consists of little more than the channel of the Dove, (here a considerable stream,) and a footpath along its banks, which, in winter, is frequently covered with water. The upper part of the dale is locally called Bunster-dale, and derives a melancholy interest from an accident, which occurred about the middle of the last century. A dignitary of the church, says an old topographer, was riding along the irregular sides of the precipice, accompanied by a young lady behind him; and pursuing a track which happened to be only a sheep-path leading to a declivity, he fell, in attempting to turn his horse out of it. He was killed, but the young lady was caught by a bush, and saved.

There is a chasteness of effect about the rocks and woods of Dovedale, which give it a distinctive character. Nothing can be conceived more picturesquely beautiful, than the composition of its scenery. Everything seems to harmonize; and yet its character is original. This originality may be traced to its detached, perpendicular rocks, the most remarkable of which is described by the guides as Dovedale Church, which raises its gray, solitary, tempest-beaten head, amongst surrounding woods, with an almost indescribable effect; so much so, indeed, as to have been termed, "the characteristic feature of the dale."

Another of its remarkable features is a natural arch, more than forty feet high, about a mile from the entrance we have described from the Ashbourne road, which forms part of a precipitous line of rock, and leads to two singular caverns, called Reynard's Hall and Kitchen. The view from this point, although confined, affords a very characteristic bit of scenery.

Our engraving presents one of the wildest and most sequestered scenes of this beautiful glen—of its romantic combinations of woods and rocks, "bald with dry antiquity." He who can wander through such scenes as these, without having his thoughts elevated to the contemplation of their beneficent Author—without having his mind calmed and purified—must have a heart hard as the rocks he contemplates.

Excursions are very frequently made by parties from the surrounding districts, even from considerable

distances, to this charming valley. Ashbourne is the best place to rendezvous at; and the extreme richness and fertility of its environs presents another evidence of the diversified nature of the county, and affords a vivid contrast to the wildness of the scenery which it borders.

There are some interesting antiquities in Derbyshire, which we may glance at on another occasion. Amongst them, we may particularly instance those of the Peak—the shattered ruins of Peveril Castle, Beauchief Abbey, and some remarkable crosses, particularly at Eyam and Whetstone;—Dale Abbey, Bolsover Castle, Codnor Castle, Gressly Castle, Melborn Castle, and All Saints' Church, at Derby, also, each present their attractions for the lovers of "hoar antiquity."

Some "old-world" customs still linger in this county, but they are rapidly disappearing, as may be supposed, when we state, that a railway has already been constructed through the Peak district*. One of these customs—*well-flowering*—is so interesting, as to demand a brief notice, especially as it occurs nearly in the locality of Dovedale, at the romantic village of Tissington, near Ashbourne. Every anniversary of Holy Thursday is kept as a high festival at Tissington; the villagers array themselves in their best attire, and keep open house for their friends. All the wells in the place, which are five in number, are decorated with wreaths and garlands of newly-gathered flowers, disposed in various devices. Boards are sometimes used, cut into different forms or figures, and then covered with moist clay, into which the stems of the flowers are inserted, to preserve their freshness, and they are so arranged as to form a beautiful mosaic-work; when thus adorned, the boards are so disposed at the springs, that the water appears to issue from amidst beds of flowers. After service at church, where a sermon is preached, a procession is made, and the wells are visited in succession; the Psalms for the day, the Epistle and Gospel, are read, one at each well, and the whole concludes with a hymn, sung by the church-singers, accompanied by a band of music. Rural sports, and holiday pastimes, occupy the remainder of the day†. We trust that the rattling of railway carriages, or the march of *utilitarianism*, may not induce the unsophisticated and happy villagers of Tissington to abandon this pleasing custom of their forefathers.—VYVYAN.

* This triumph of science, the Cromford and High Peak railway, extends for a distance of thirty-four miles, and opens a communication between the counties of Derby, Nottingham, and Leicester, and Manchester, and Liverpool. It passes over some very high land, its greatest elevation being 990 feet above the level of the Cromford canal.

† See RHODZ'S *Peak Scenery*.

To look on the creation with an eye of interest and feeling must be ever acceptable to the Creator. To trace out the several properties of his works, and to study with diligence and humility their laws, their uses and operations, is an employment worthy the immortal mind of man; since it is one of those studies which we may reasonably hope will survive beyond the grave—when we shall no longer see through a "glass darkly," what wonders of creation, spiritual as well as material, may unfold themselves to our view. But if we pass through this world, as the slumberer does through the night, unconscious of what lies around us, how can we be assured that those excellent things will delight us in futurity, of which we had no perception in our preparatory state? These, it must be admitted, are speculative notions, but they may be true; and they are certainly harmless: we may hope, therefore, they may be indulged.—MRS. BRAY.

Be content to keep within your station, and adorn it by the virtues which its duties require

THE SEA.

WHEN we place ourselves upon the shore, and from thence behold that immense body of water, stretching away on all sides as far as the eye can reach; and when we consider how large a portion of the globe is covered in like manner, what a noble idea are we hereby enabled to form of the immensity of that Being in whose sight the ocean is no more than a drop!

When we see a mass of water rising up by a gradual ascent, till the sky seems to descend and close upon it, a thought immediately strikes us,—what is it which prevents these waters from breaking in upon and overflowing the land, as they appear in heaps so much above it? It is God's will that it should be so; and when He gives the word, the obedient waves bow themselves and retire. How grand and awful is the noise of the sea, even as the sound of the voice of the Almighty when He speaketh.

Pleasing is the variety of prospects which the Sea at different times affords us: for one while calm and unruffled, it reflects a bright and beautiful image of the light which shineth upon it from above; at another, it is dark and cloudy, stormy and tempestuous, agitated from the very bottom, and its "restless waters cast up mire and dirt."

To behold the ebbing and flowing of the tide is an amusement ever new. By this contrivance of Divine wisdom, the whole mass of sea-water is kept in continual motion, which, together with the salt contained in it, preserves it from corrupting, and poisoning the world. At one part of the day, therefore, the ocean seems to be leaving us, and going to other more favoured coasts; but at the stated period, as if it had only paused to recover itself, it returns again by gradual advances, till it be arrived at its former height. There is an ebb and a flow in all human affairs, and a turn of events may render him happy who is now miserable; the vessel which is stranded may yet be borne upon the waters, may put out again to sea, and be blessed with a prosperous voyage.

Nor is the Sea more wonderful in itself than it is beneficial to mankind. From its surface vapours are continually arising, drawn upwards by the heat of the sun, which, by degrees, formed into clouds, drop fatness on our fields and gardens, causing even the wilderness to smile, and the valleys, covered over with corn, to laugh and sing.

We are likewise indebted to the ocean for many springs, which have their origin from the great deep beneath, with which the Sea communicates. These, arising in vapour through the lower parts of the earth, break forth and issue in streams, many of which joined form rivers, and so go back again to the place from whence they came, but not till, by their innumerable turnings and windings, they have refreshed and enriched large tracts of country in their passage.

Barren and desolate as the Sea appears to those who only look upon it, and search not into it, yet within its bosom are contained creatures exceeding in number those that walk and creep upon the land. The industry and ingenuity of man have found means to draw forth these inhabitants of the waters from their deepest recesses; and while they afford to some an agreeable variety of wholesome food, they support multitudes of others whose employment it is to procure them, an employment, healthy, honest, carried on in peace and quietness, without tumult, noise, strife, and bloodshed, affording to those who are engaged in it continual opportunities of beholding "the works of the Lord, and His wonders in the deep."

By the invention of shipping, and the art of navigation, the Sea is made, in reality, to join those nations which it appears to divide, the communication being often far more easy and expeditious by water than it would have been by land. The riches of both the Indies are wafted to our shores; we sit at home and feast upon the productions of every country under heaven, while the superfluity of our own commodities is disposed of to advantage abroad. A friendly intercourse is opened between the most distant lands; savages are humanized, and become proficient in the arts and sciences; the Gospel is preached among them, and the light of truth made to shine upon those who sat in darkness and the shadow of death. A large vessel, with all its conveniences, constructed in such a manner as to go upon the surface of the water, and to brave the fury of the winds and waves, is, perhaps, the master-piece of human contrivance; and the Psalmist, when contemplating the wonders of the ocean, cries out in admiration,—“There go the ships!”

The Sea may likewise be considered as an emblem of the world, and of what is passing therein. Under a smiling, deceitful surface, both conceal dangerous rocks and quicksands, on which the unskilful mariner will strike and be lost; both abound with creatures pursuing and devouring each other, the small and weak becoming a prey to the great and powerful, while in both there is a grand “destroyer, a Leviathan taking his pastime,” and seeking the perdition of all. In the voyage of life, we may set out with a still sea and a fair sky, but, ere long, cares and sorrows, troubles and afflictions, overtake us. At God's word, either to punish or to prove us, the stormy wind ariseth and lifteth up the waves; we are carried sometimes up to heaven with hope, sometimes down to the deep with despair, and our soul melteth because of trouble. Then it is that our heavenly Father shows us what poor helpless creatures we are without Him, and tribulation becomes the parent of devotion. If we cry unto the Lord in our trouble, He will deliver us out of our distress, and we shall arrive in safety at the desired haven, where all the tossings and agitations of human affairs shall cease, and where there shall be “no more SEA.”

—BISHOP HORNE.

AFFECTION is a plant of delicate growth, and, though it sometimes springs up spontaneously, it will never flourish long and well without culture; and when I see how it is treated in some families, the wonder is, not that it does not spread so as to overshadow the whole circle, but that any sprig of it should survive the rude treatment that it meets with—*The Young Lady's Friend*.

“If good people,” said Archbishop Usher, “would but make goodness agreeable, and smile, instead of frowning in their virtue, how many would they win to the good cause.”

TRUE honour, or the fear of doing anything base, or unworthy, is a noble principle: while false honour, or the fear of the world, is a degrading principle in all situations.—GILPIN.

TRULY and beautifully has it been said, that the veil which covers Futurity has been woven by the hand of Mercy.—?

“FAIR in calamity,” is a character among the Arabians, of one who bears his misfortunes with a composed steadiness.—CHAPPELW.

METHINKS men should be ashamed to profess the belief of a life to come, while they cannot behold without indignation, nor mention but with derision, that holiness without which it can never be attained, and which is indeed the seed and principle of the thing itself.—HOWE.

TO SPRING.

SPRING, how delighted, in life's early dawn,
I trod each bending vale and breezy lawn,
And marked each opening flower of freshest hue,
That drinks the genial rain or morning dew!
How pleased, beneath the noontide's silent sky,
I heard the feeble lamb's repeated cry,
While the fond mother, anxious, ceased to feed,
And watched my careless footsteps o'er the mead.
How pleased the calm and sun-warm lane I traced,
Its sides once more with cheering verdure graced,
Where 'mid the varied moss, untaught and wild,
The violet sweet and golden lily smiled,
The snow-drop meek, in virgin white arrayed,
And primrose, tenant of the pathless shade!
How pleased I wandered o'er the landscape still,
When darkening shadows wrapt the western hill,
While on the eastern slope's contrasted side,
By slow degrees the beam of evening died;
What time 'mid swimming mists the dusky spire,
And groves, and pleasing dells, from view retire;
When sleep the fainting breezes on the shore,
And the last tinkling sheep-bell speaks no more.

SPRING, thou return'st with all thy wonted grace,
The woods re-echo to thy tuneful race;
In every forest-walk and mead are seen,
Thy flowery chaplet and thy robe of green.
Again, by many a fairy dream beguiled,
I seek the upland path or shaggy wild,
And drink rich odours from the furze-clad dale,
That scents at intervals the luscious gale,
Or freshening fragrance of new moistened earth,
When shoots the strengthened barley into birth,
When cooling drops the thirsty gold-cup fill,
And the lone fisher seeks the mud-stained rill.
Or, far from vulgar cares, I trace the stream
With dripping oars, that catch the noon-day beam;
While soothing bells, in many a varied round,
Fling on the liquid tides their silver sound.
Nor, floating slow and careless, do I dread
To cast a backward view on moments fled:
Whate'er of sweet remembrance there appears,
'Tis doubly pleasing through the mist of years.
So when soft vapours, dimming mortal eyes,
Make pale the cloudless bliss of summer skies,
The blending groves, and hills of faded green,
And dark-gray battlements more large are seen.
If aught of mournful bleeding memory find,
'Tis not unwelcome to the musing mind;
While drops of milder melancholy born,
Such as Reflection's drooping cheek adorn,
From the moist sparkling eye unbidden flow,
And all the bosom melts to softer woe.
Thus, unperceived, glides on the vacant day,
And gradual steal the willowed banks away.

SPRING, thou return'st, but labour, care, and pain,
Might mar thy sweets, and make thy coming vain;
Vain is thy glad return to him who bends
Beneath hard penury, bereft of friends;
And vain to him who feeds the wasting fire
Of dim-eyed, hopeless, pining, wan desire.
The gloomy debtor's heart thou canst not cheer;
Thou canst not wipe the wretched widow's tear;
Thou canst not charm the tyrant, nor control
The busy pangs that rend his guilty soul;
And those who mourn oppression's sullen sway,
With hearts unbeating view thy golden ray;
Nor always gladdened by thy fostering care,
Thy health-inspiring suns and balmy air,
Does groaning pain forsake his tedious bed,
Or pining sickness rest her drooping head.

Nor shine thy rapturous moments always fair
To him who droops beneath no private care;
Still shall the generous breast its views extend,
And share the griefs of all, to all a friend.
Dear to the virtuous soul is pity's tear,
Beyond all sensual, selfish pleasure dear;
Dear is the sigh to wailing misery paid,
And sweet the toil that seeks the poor to aid;
Nor is there bliss in all this scene below,
Like his who rescues want, or comforts woe.
Still as thy hours return, delightful Spring,
These mild emotions to my bosom bring;

The bliss thy charms inspire, chastised by these,
Beyond all wild unmeaning joy shall please.

So, sweeter than the feverish glare of day,
Is meek and pensive evening's sober ray,
When the sad bird begins to charm the vales,
And earth revives beneath the cooling gales;
So, when its beauteous tints the rainbow rears,
More fresh and green the moistened soil appears;
The showers in silence shed expand the heart,
And fragrance, peace, and hope to man impart.

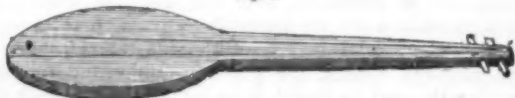
REV. E. HAMLEY.

MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS. No. IV.

STRINGED INSTRUMENTS.

THE Stringed Instruments already described were made to give out musical sounds, by causing a vibratory motion in their strings by means of the fingers. In the instruments now about to be described, the same effect is produced by means of horse-hair or silk, strained upon a bow, and drawn across the strings of the instrument; or else by those strings being struck with a stick or piece of metal; of these the best known is the violin. We have no knowledge of a stringed instrument played by a bow having been employed by any of the nations of antiquity; but there is a carving on an Egyptian obelisk at Rome, Fig. 1, which represents an instrument evidently originally furnished

Fig. 1.



with two strings, which is formed with a neck, and has two pegs by which these strings could be tuned, and by means of the fingers, or otherwise, they could be made shorter or longer, so as to produce a variety of sounds, as in the violin. It is not supposed that this instrument was played with a bow, but it evidently shows, in its arrangement, a great resemblance to modern stringed instruments of the violin kind, and is another indication of the high state of civilization of this ancient nation; for in no other case has an ancient stringed instrument been discovered, in which the sounding-board is furnished with a neck; it is represented as about twenty-one inches in length.

There are numerous European instruments partaking of the form of the Violin, which are but little known in any other country besides Italy. Of those struck with the bow we may notice the Viol, larger than the Violin, with six strings; the Viol di Gamba, (*leg-viol*), with six strings, (this number varies in different countries,) is the largest of all, and the same as our Bass-Viol. The Viol d'Amour, played like the Violin, has four strings, but underneath these there are four metallic strings of small brass or iron wire, which were called *sympathetic strings*; these were never touched by the bow, but were caused to vibrate by the sound of the strings over them when played upon. Another Viol d'Amour is mentioned with twelve strings, six gut and six metal. The Violoncello is smaller than the Bass-Viol; and, among the Italians, there is another instrument, called the Viol di Braccio, *arm-viol*, still smaller, but not so small as the Violin.

The Violin itself is considered "the most perfect, the most agreeable, and the most common, of all stringed instruments played with the bow; it is in the power of the performer on this sovereign of the orchestra to make the intonation of all keys equally perfect."

In England the Violin appears not to have been

known before the sixteenth century. In the seventeenth century, "Viols of various sizes, with six strings, and fretted like the guitar, began, indeed, to be admitted into chamber-concerts; but when the performance was public, these instruments were too feeble for the obtuse organs of our Gothic ancestors;" and the low state of regal music in the time of Henry the Eighth may be gathered from the accounts given in Hall's and Holingshed's Chronicle, of a masque at Cardinal Wolsey's Palace at Whitehall, where the king was entertained with "a concert of drums and fifes;" but this was soft music compared with that of his heroic daughter, Elizabeth, who, according to Hentzner, used to be regaled during dinner "with twelve trumpets and two kettle-drums."

Fig. 2 is an instrument with one string, used with a bow, which was formerly employed on board of

Fig. 2.



ship to communicate a signal; it had the name of the *Sea-trumpet*. Fig. 3 is the *Lu-tchun* (regulator of harmony,) of the Chinese; it has twelve cords, which, when played on, are struck with a short stick. The Chinese consider this as the most perfect musical instrument in existence, and they give the following quaint reasons for its particular form and construction: "The total length of the instrument should be fifty-five inches, the perfect number of heaven and earth, and its length from one bridge to another, that is, the length of the sonorous portion, should be fifty inches, the number of the *great expansion*; the width at either end of the instrument should be eight inches, the number that represents the eight quarters of the wind, and its thickness, that is, its height from the upper to the lower surface, ought to be one inch

Fig. 3.



and a half. It should have twelve cords, to produce the twelve harmonic sounds, and twelve points of division to tune the instrument, (the twelve dots along the centre at one end); this number, twelve, represents the twelve lunations of the vulgar year. The bridge at the upper end of the instrument ought to be six lines in height, and that at the lower end six-tenths of a line, to represent the six hours that the Chinese count from midnight to midday, and from midday to midnight, (twelve Chinese hours form twenty-four of our's.) The thickness of each bridge should be five lines, and the length eight inches. These numbers of five, six, and eight, represent the five tones, the six *yang-lu*, (simply *lu*), and the eight sounds, &c.

Fig. 4.

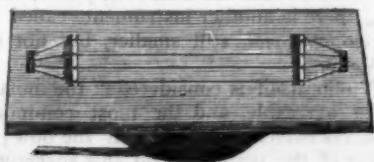


Fig. 4 is a stringed instrument, formed of a thin board fixed on half of a calabash; it is in common use among the natives of Congo.

POPULAR LEGENDS AND FICTIONS.

No. V.

POPULAR FICTIONS AND SUPERSTITIONS AMONG DIFFERENT NATIONS.

WHEN popular superstitions are considered in detail, a singular degree of uniformity is discovered in that realm wherein most diversity might be expected, namely, the ideal world. Imagination may be said to possess a boundless power of creation and combination, and yet, in every region and every age, those beings which have an existence only in fancy, betray, when freely called into action, so close an affinity one to the other, as to justify us in ascribing to nearly the whole of them a comparatively simultaneous origin, rather than in viewing them as the results of successive inventions. Their attributes and qualities, however modified in transmission, are impressed by tokens which prove the traditionary character of the superstitions wherein they are involved. The vague credulity of the more modern peasant agrees with the systematic mythology of pagan times, and nations whom the ocean separates are united in the same delusions: thus, the village gossip retails, though in ignorance of so doing, the supposed exploits of the divinities of classical antiquity, and the *Hamadryads* of Greece, and the *Elves* of Scandinavia, join the phantoms who swarm around the wizard, when, according to the poet, he enters that gloomy dell,—

..... where the sad mandrake grows
Whose groans are deathful, the dead-numbing nightshade,
The stupefying hemlock, adder's tongue,
And Martagon.—The shrieks of luckless owls
He hears, and croaking night-crows in the air;
Green-bellied snakes, blue fire-drakes in the sky,
And giddy flitter-mice with leathern wings,
And scaly beetles with their habergeons,
That make a humming murmur as they fly.
There, in the stocks of trees while fays do dwell,
And span-long elves that dance about a pool
With each a little changeling in their arms,
The airy spirits play with falling stars,
And mount the sphere of fire.

Amidst the evanescent groups whose revels are embodied in the noble lines of the poet, the FAIRIES are the most poetical and the most potent. Many theories respecting the origin of these fanciful beings have been founded on their names, into which it would be idle now to enter: it is sufficient to remark, that superstition has endowed them in all places with similar attributes, and ascribed to them similar doings. The Fairies of the sunny East, and the Elves of the frigid North, differ only in such degree as will be readily accounted for by the difference of climate, the manners of the people, and the progressive approach of that light of intelligence before which these relics of heathenism must, ere long, wholly disappear.

More familiar beings of the imaginative world are enumerated in the homely rhymes of John Heywood, who tells us that,—

In John Melesius any one may read
Of divels in Sarmatia honoured,
Called KATRI or KOBALDI, such as we
PUGS and HORGOLINS call; there dwelling be
In corners of old houses least frequented,
Or beneath stacks of wood; and these convented,
Make fearful noise in butteries and in dairies.
ROBIN GOODFELLOWS some, some call them FAIRIES.
In solitarie rooms these uproars keep,
And beat at doors to wake men from their sleep,
Seeming to force locks, be they ne'er so strong,
And keeping Christmasse gambols all night long.

PUCK. ROBIN GOODFELLOW, ETC.

At first we may not be pleased with the diabolical relationship assigned to the lithe and sportive subjects

of King Oberon and Queen Titania; but the writers on demonology of the last age gravely laboured to prove that the kith and kin of the queen of Elfland are no other than Satan himself in various disguises. Such is the first who answers to our call, the merry wanderer Puck, who was said to have long dwelt in the house of the gray friars at Schwerin, or Mecklenburgh, which he haunted in the form of a pug, or monkey. Puck, notwithstanding the tricks which he played upon all strangers who visited the monastery, was sufficiently useful to its inmates. He turned the spit, drew the wine, and cleaned the kitchen, while the lay-brothers were snoring: yet, in spite of all these services, the monk, to whom the world is indebted for "*A Veritable Relation of the Demon Puck*," has described him as an "impure spirit."

Friar Rush, to whom we have already alluded, (p. 62,) is Puck under another name. Puck is also found under the character of ROBIN GOODFELLOW, or ROBIN HOOD; the outlaw of that name having acquired it from his resemblance to the unquiet wandering spirit. The ROBIN HOOD of England is also the Scottish RED CAP, and the Saxon HUDKEN, or HOODEKIN,—so called from the *hood*kin, or little hood, or hat, which he wore, and which also covers his head when he appears in the shape of the Nisse of Sweden.

SWEDISH MYTHOLOGY.

IN Sweden, Puck assumes the denomination of NISSEGODRENG, or *Nisse the Good Knave*; and consorts with the TOMTEGUBBE, or the *Old Man of the House-Top*, who is of the same genus. They are found in every farm-yard,—kind and serviceable when kindly treated, but irascible and capricious, and the dairy-maid who chances to offend them, has an ill time of it.

In the neighbouring kingdom of Denmark, wonderful cunning in music is ascribed to the PUCKS; and there is a certain jig or dance called the Elf-king's dance, well known amongst the country crowd, which yet no one dares to play. Its notes produce the same effect as the enchanted horn of Oberon; whenever it is heard, old and young are compelled to foot it to the tune,—nay, the very stools and tables begin to caper; nor can the musician undo the charm, and release the victims from the doom of perpetual dancing, unless he can play the tune backwards without misplacing a note, or unless one of the involuntary dancers can contrive to pass behind, and cut the strings of the fiddle by reaching over his shoulders. This silly belief, a mixture of imposture and superstition, still prevails.

The people of Sweden, whether high or low, are all particularly addicted to a belief in ghosts and spirits; with the lower classes, indeed, it is not only a passion as an entertainment, but a serious matter of faith. A sufficient proof, too, that such superstitions are not always confined to the common class, may be found in the general credence that was given, even in Stockholm, to the vision of Charles the Eleventh*, which with us, and at the present day, would be considered as the mere effect of delirium. But with the peasant such belief seems to be a part of his habitual thinking; and even the postilion will en-

tertain the traveller on his journey with tales of his popular superstitions. These are, perhaps, more numerous with the Swede than with the peasant of any other country, each element having its peculiar spirits, and each spirit some legend of love or terror attached to his existence.

The Swedish word *Troll* is very undefined; properly speaking, it means the little wood and mountain spirits; but it is also applied, in a more general sense, to the whole race of supernatural beings in their various forms and attributes. The wood and water sprites are known more particularly under the names of *Skagara* and *Sjora*, little beings that milk the cows and lame the horses; but if anything of iron is cast over them, their power to work mischief ceases. The cattle may be also secured from them by hiding garlic or assafoetida about their heads.

Among the spirits that have most to do with the human race, the *Kobolds* play a conspicuous part. They dwell in and about the habitations of men, on which account they are commonly called *Tömtgubbar*, *Tömtgubbe*, (meaning the old woman of the hearth,) and sometimes *Tömtbizar*, and *Nisse god drang*, (*Nisse* good lad,) because they help the family in all its difficulties. These are said to swarm in the lofty trees that grow near houses; on which account great care is to be taken not to cut any down, especially those that are old.

If any one falls sick, and the cause of his illness is unknown, the common people at once ascribe it to the supposed guardian spirits of the place where the party was first affected—hence the common expression, "he has met with something evil in the air,—in the water,—in the fields." In such cases, it is essential to mollify the *Nisse*, which may be done by pouring liquor into a goblet, and mixing with it the filings of a bride-ring, or of silver, or of any metal that has been inherited. This mixture is to be taken to the place where the man was supposed to be taken ill, and poured over the left shoulder of him who takes it, but he must not look round or utter a syllable.

In addition to the belief in these things, which seem to be of the peculiar growth of the country, the Swedes have tales of dwarfs and giants, and the night-mare, and dragons whose office it is to watch concealed treasures. Nor is there with them any want of Elves or Fairies, the lightest and prettiest creatures of the creations of the popular superstition of the North. *Elf*, (in the plural *Elfwor*,) in its original and limited acceptation, signifies a river-sprite; and hence every great river is called *Elf*; for instance, *Gota-Elf*.

The mythology of these little beings is nearly the same among the Swedes as it was in this country about a century ago; and when the Swedish carle sees a circle on the morning grass, he attributes it to the midnight dances of the fairies. With them, as with us,—

O'er the dewy green,
By the glow-worm's light,
Dance the elves of night
Unheard unseen.

Yet where their midnight pranks have been
The circled turf will betray to-morrow.

* The account of this vision is preserved at Stockholm, in the king's own hand-writing. On the night of the 16th of December, 1676, it is said, he was sitting in his chamber, and was surprised at the appearance of a light in the hall of the Diet. Accompanied by two noblemen he descended to the hall, which they found hung with black cloth and lighted up. In the centre, surrounding a table, sat sixteen venerable men, each with a large volume before him; above them was the king with the crown on his head and sceptre in his hand, having on one side a personage about forty years old, and on the other an old man of seventy, who appeared very urgent that he should make a sign with his head, which as often as he did, the

venerable men struck their hands on their books. Further, he beheld executioners cutting off the heads of many young men, and the throne being overturned. On asking when these things should be, the young king answered, "In the days of the sixth sovereign after you; he shall be of the same age as I appear now to be, and the person now sitting beside me resembles the regent. During the last year of the regency, the country shall be sold by some young men, but the king and regent shall subdue them, and the Swedes prosper under the young king's reign." Having thus said, the king adds, the whole vanished, and we saw nothing but ourselves and our flambeaux.

Sometimes, however, the night-wanderer is unlucky enough to enter into their charmed circle, and then they instantly become visible to him, and play him a thousand tricks; but always more in waywardness than in malice, for they are not really mischievous. Their voice, too, is said to be as gentle as the murmuring of the air; and, indeed, the only point in which they are not quite so poetical as the English fairy is the place of their dwelling, which, instead of being a cowslip-bell, is the hollow of a round little stone, called an Elf-mill. Shakspeare makes his "delicate Ariel" sing—

Where the bee sucks, there lurk I;
In a cowslip's bell I lie;
There I couch when owls do cry.

The fable of the spirit called *Sprömkari* is no less beautiful, though belonging to another element. According to the old belief, he sits in his blue depths, playing constantly on the harp; and when any children by chance have seen him in his lonely waters, they have always received from him the gift of harmony, for he himself lives in eternal music. He will play, too, by lakes and streams, to the dancing of the elves, who, on his account, generally choose the river-meads for the place of their midnight revelling, a superstition infinitely more beautiful than the sweetest of Greece or Rome.

The *Skogara* is a spirit of a darker nature, whose cry is often heard at night in the woods. On such occasions he must be answered by calling out *He!* which prevents it doing any injury.

The *Neck* is no less evil; but he belongs to the water; and formerly those who intended to bathe, used first to charm him by flinging some metal substance into the stream; at such times of security, it was the custom of the peasants to taunt him with mocking verses, singing,—

Neck, Neck, you thief, you're on the land, but I'm in the water;

and on coming out of the water again, they took back the metal, reversing the words,

Neck, Neck, you thief, I'm on the land, but you're in the water.

Such mischievous beings, as well as magic animals, are not to be called by their own names; but by euphemisms, or by slight allusions to their peculiar characteristics. In beating cats, or speaking crossly to them, their name must not be spoken out, for they belong to the *infernal host*, and have acquaintances among the *Bergtroll* in the mountains, where they frequently visit.

The cuckoo, the owl, and the pie, are birds of supernatural powers, and great care is to be taken how you speak to them, or you run the risk of being choked. They are not to be killed either without good reason, for their adherents might revenge their deaths. But it is still more dangerous to harm toads, for enchanted princesses are often hidden in them; and many who have neglected this caution, have been struck lame for their temerity, without either fall or blow. If you speak of the *Trollpack* (the witch host), you must name fire and water, and the name of the church that you belong to; this prevents them from doing any injury. The weasel must not be called weasel, but *advine*; the fox you must call *blue-foot*, or, he who runs in the woods; the wolf, *gray-foot*, or *gold-foot*; and the bear, the *old man*, or the *grandfather*. With these precautions you may shoot them, and they lose the power of harming you.

According to the same superstition, too, children born on Sunday can see spirits, and tame the dragon who watches over hidden treasures.

A *Tomtegubbe* is generally imagined in the shape of

a deformed dwarf, whose favourite colour is gray,—that is, as applied to his own person, for he cannot bear it in others, and hence the gray cattle of some places never prosper. But a good *Tomtegubbe* is a friendly creature, who protects the house in all danger, and often does the work of the servants when they sleep too long o'mornings. This superstition extends even to Stockholm. If one of these spirits is reported to be visible anywhere in the evening, something extraordinary is expected; according to the popular belief, they have always been seen roaming disquietedly about the royal castles, and the parts adjacent, on the eve of any of those revolutions so frequent in Swedish history.

THE SCANDINAVIAN NEKKAR AND TRUTONIC NIXES.

ACCORDING to the Scandinavian mythology, Odin assumes the name of the *NIKKAR*, or *HNICKAR*, when he acts as the destroying, or evil principle. In this character he inhabits the lakes and rivers of Scandinavia, where, under the ancient appellation of the *NIKKER* (the *Old Nick* of England, and the *Kelpie* of Scotland), he raises sudden storms and tempests, and leads mankind into destruction. There is a gloomy lake in the island of Rugen, its waters are turbid, and its shores covered with thick woods; this, it is said, he loves to haunt; and here he vexes the fishermen, and amuses himself by placing their boats on the summits of the loftiest fir-trees.

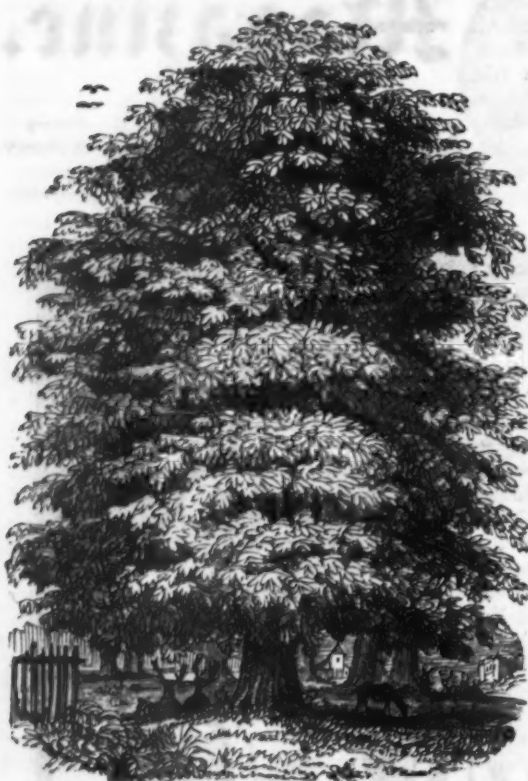
Propitiatory worship is offered to the being which is feared. So strangely have the superstitions of the middle ages amalgamated with the more ancient popular mythology, that the *Nekker*, by an easy transition, became the *St. NICHOLAS*, the patron of sailors, whose aid is invoked in storms and tempests.

The Scandinavian *Nekkar* generated the river-men and river-maids, the Teutonic *Nixes*. None of the latter are more celebrated than the nymphs of the Elbe and the Saal. In the days of paganism, the Saxons, who dwelt in the district between these rivers, worshipped a female deity, whose temple was situated in the town of Magdeburg, or Meydeburgh, "the Maiden's Castle;" and who still continued to be feared as the nymph of the Elbe in after-times. Often was she said to appear at Magdeburgh, where she was wont to visit the market with her basket hanging on her arm; she was gentle in her manner, and neat in her dress, and nothing differing in appearance from a burgher's daughter; yet one corner of her snow-white apron appeared constantly wet, as a token of her aquatic nature.

Pretorius, a credulous yet valuable writer of the sixteenth century, tells us that the Elbe nymph sometimes sits on the banks of the river combing her golden hair—a description agreeing with the rude "counterfyt" which Botho has given, probably from tradition, of the goddesses of Magdeburgh. Beautiful and fair as the *Nixes* seem to be, the ruling passion retains its unity—the evil one is veiled—and the water-nymphs assert their affinity to the deluder, the tormentor, the destroyer. Inevitable death awaits the wretch who is seduced by their charms. They seize and drown the swimmer, and entice the child; and when they anticipate that their malevolence will be gratified, they are seen daily darting over the surface of the waters.

Witnesses were not wanting, who asserted that the inundations in the Valais, which happened some years ago, were caused by demons, who, if not strictly *Nekkars*, or *Nixes*, are at least of an amphibious nature. This story is still current among the peasants in the neighbourhood of St. Maurice.

NOTES ON FOREST TREES. No. X.

THE HORSE CHESTNUT, (*Aesculus hippocastanum*.)

THE Horse Chestnut tree, and the Spanish or Sweet Chestnut, (*Fagus castanea*), although, from the similarity of their fruit they bear the same name, are, nevertheless, two very distinct genera; the Spanish Chestnut being more nearly allied to the Beech. There are, at least, three species of the Horse Chestnut, two natives of America, and one of Asia. The Asiatic species, the common Horse Chestnut, is supposed to have been brought into Europe as early as the year 1550; it was taken to Vienna, and from thence to France and Italy: those which were imported into England came from the Levant. As a tree it is extremely grand, although, perhaps, somewhat formal, from the regularity of its growth. It is also distinguished by the beautiful arrangement of its white blossoms. The most eligible situation for the Horse Chestnut is in lawns and parks, planted singly, its overshadowing branches affording an excellent protection for cattle from the heat of the sun; the fruit, also, is good food for the deer, who are very partial to it. It is a tree of very quick growth, but as it soon reaches maturity, it as soon decays, and the wood is of little value.

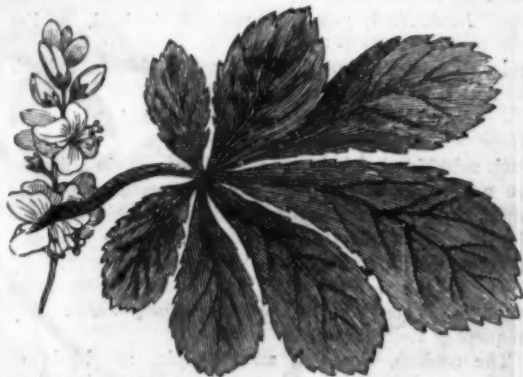
In Turkey, the nuts of this tree are ground and mixed with provender for horses, and they are considered excellent for these animals in cases of coughs, &c. A French agriculturist gave them, mixed with other food, to his cows, and considered that they increased the quantity of milk, without injuring the quality. An Italian physician declares that he found the bark, after repeated trials, to be equal to Peruvian bark in cases of fever, and several other writers have mentioned the same fact. In France it has been used for the purpose of bleaching yarn. Twenty nuts, being peeled and rasped into ten or twelve quarts of hot rain or river-water, were employed in preparing woollen and silk goods to receive the dye,

with considerable success; and it has been supposed, that, if the meal of the nuts were made into cakes, or balls, it would answer the purpose of soap. Starch has also been prepared from them, and the dried nut finely powdered has been employed as an eye-snuff.

There is one species, a native of Brazil, Carolina, &c., which, if it could be cultivated with success in this country, would make a beautiful addition to the appearance of a gentleman's park, the blossoms being of a bright scarlet. The common method resorted to by nurserymen who propagate this tree for sale, is to graft or bud it upon stocks of the common Horse Chestnut, but as the stock fast outgrows the graft, the tree soon becomes unsightly, and in the course of a few years is apt to decay.

The common Horse Chestnut is propagated by sowing the nuts, after preserving them in sand during the Winter, in order to prevent their rotting early in the Spring. In this case the plants, in a proper soil, will shoot nearly a foot the first Summer, and they may be transplanted either the following Autumn, or in February or March, into the nursery, and set in rows at the distance of three feet, and one foot asunder, where they are to remain two years, and they will then be fit for planting where they are to continue. The most favourable soil for them is a sandy loam, inclining to moisture.

The whole annual shoot of this tree is completed in less than three weeks after the buds are opened, and as soon as the flowers are fallen, the buds for the succeeding year are formed, which continue swelling till Autumn, when they are overspread with a thick tenacious juice, that defends them from the action of the frost, and on the return of warm weather this melts and runs off, and leaves the buds at liberty to expand themselves.



LEAF AND BLOSSOM OF THE HORSE CHESTNUT.

To watch the economy of birds,—to mark the enjoyment of the animal world,—to view with an eye of interest and contemplation the fields "with verdure clad," and every opening blossom bursting into beauty and to life, are enjoyments that instruct and delight youth, middle, and old age. They supply us with a source of innocent employment, to which none need be dead but those who wilfully become so by keeping their eyes closed before that book of Nature which is everywhere spread around, that we should read in it those characters of an Almighty hand that lead the mind to wonder at and adore his goodness, and the heart to acknowledge and to feel his power, as a Father, who in his "wisdom has created," and preserves them all. —MRS. BRAY.

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